

Burkina Faso National Day

Making important forward strides through democratic process

Located in the heart of West Africa, Burkina Faso covers an area of 274,000 sq. kilometers and has a population of more than 17 million.

Every Dec. 11, Burkina Faso and its people celebrate the anniversary of the country's proclamation of the republic, when Upper Volta became an autonomous republic in the French Community on this day in 1958.

Later, on Aug. 5, 1960, the country attained full independence from France.

In 1984, on the initiative of then President Thomas Sankara (1949-1987), the country's name was changed from Upper Volta to Burkina Faso, meaning "Land of the honest people" in the local language.

In October 2014, a popular uprising occurred to reject an attempt by the government to amend the constitution to allow the incumbent president Blaise Compaore, who had already ruled for 27 years, to stay in office longer than the legal tenure.

Following President Compaore's forced exile, a new president was elected for a transitional period of one year. The duty of the Transitional President Michel Kafando was to carry out democratic and transparent presidential and legislative elections by November 2015.

Although originally scheduled for October, the poll was postponed after a coup by the presidential guard in September. Kafando and the prime minister were restored to power after a week, and the presidential guard was disbanded.

On Nov. 29, Burkina Faso held presidential and legislative elections, and Roch Marc Christian Kabore was named president elect, according to preliminary results announced last week.

Burkina Faso's National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) announced results showing Kabore, from the People's Movement for



The Memorial to the Martyrs, also known as the Monument to National Heroes, is located in the new district of the capital Ouagadougou. EMBASSY OF BURKINA FASO

Progress party, won 53.49 percent of the vote, achieving more than the 51 percent needed to avoid a runoff.

According to CENI, 60 percent of the country's 5.5 million registered voters

participated in the elections.

The 58-year-old Kabore was prime minister and parliament speaker under Compaore. In January 2014, Kabore and others broke with the president in opposition of the proposed

constitutional amendment that would allow Compaore to extend his power.

Kabore will be the second civilian president since the country gained independence from France in 1960. Since then, the country has gone through six coups.

On the occasion of the elections, the Japanese government provided political and financial support, including a total of around ¥100 million in aid, as well as 21 vehicles and 8 motorbikes, which were used by CENI. Additionally, two diplomats from the Embassy of Japan in Burkina Faso participated in the electoral observation activities in the capital of Ouagadougou on election day, according to the official website of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Foreign Press Secretary Yasuhisa Kawamura delivered a statement on Dec. 2, saying "Japan highly appreciates the peaceful conduct of the presidential and legislative elec-

tions in Burkina Faso on Nov. 29 and expresses its respect for the transitional government and institutions that prepared for the elections, as well as all the people of Burkina Faso.

"The provisional results of the presidential election disclosed by Burkina Faso's National Independent Electoral Commission indicated that Mr. Roch Marc Christian Kabore won the majority in the first round. Japan appreciates that other candidates accepted this in a peaceful manner and expects the final results to be confirmed through democratic process."

Led by a president democratically elected by the people, the country will begin to move forward in addressing challenges in the economic and social sectors.

Information derived from the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and other sources

Congratulations to the People of Burkina Faso on the 55th Anniversary of Their Independence

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